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# Watson's Art Journal.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, SEPT. 14, 1867.

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## MADAME ADELAIDE RISTORI.

Ristori has arrived; she has made her second landing, among a people who, receiving her courteously as a stranger, a year ago, soon learned to admire her, and proved, by their actions, that they knew how to appreciate and reward a talent so transcendent. The triumph of Ristori was one of the proudest ever achieved by an actress. Rachael's career in this country was also a triumph, but although she had to contend with difficulties consequent upon speaking in a foreign tongue, still her language was familiar to, perhaps, two-thirds of her hearers. Ristori had far greater difficulties to overcome, for it may be safely averred that not five in every hundred of her audiences, understood one word that she uttered, and consequently her triumph is the greater; for it was her consummate Art which revealed the grand and lofty emotions, the subtle passions and the sublime human pathos by an electric sympathy, and with a force and intensity far exceeding that of words.

Another difficulty was the high, classic tone of the dramas which she presented. It is true that a certain portion of our Society, from education and travel, are in sympathy with such dramatic literature, but the mass of the public would vote it, in any other hands than those of Ristori, an unmitigated bore.

It is the fire of Genius that thus transmutes this, as it were, dumb action, into burning, passionate eloquence; giving gesticulation a voice, which, by turns, awes, thrills and subdues. Genius alone could so enchain a public so little educated to the higher walk of dramatic literature, for our stage offers but few examples by which a pure taste can be cultivated. There the naked horse-riding and leg-dramas flourish, attracting thousands who court contamination, and acquire a taste for anything but decorum or mental improvement. There the physical is the rule, the intellectual the exception. New York has become a nursery for half-fledged thespians who leave it to overrun the country as stars. A little money and a complaisant press achieves a metropolitan reputation, and the raw, uneducated, but impudently self-assured actor or actress, goes forth to astonish the "groundlings" with the stamp of New York approbation as an endorsement!

It is pleasant to turn from such desecra-

tion of the drama, and from such perversion of the duties of the press, to the intellectual grandeur which surrounds, like a halo, the personations of Ristori. There the atmosphere is suggestive of culture and refinement; the tone is elevated; the surroundings are in keeping; propriety rules the stage and the auditorium, and the earnest reality of the actors, is reflected in the riveted, intelligent attention of the beholders. By such an entertainment only the higher and nobler feelings are aroused; everything tends to an elevation of thought, and no one retires from such a performance without taking home food for reflection, without feeling that something has been learned, and that the time has been profitably spent.

The influence of Ristori is felt in all circles; it has made itself felt even through the tawdry tinseled coverings of our stage. The Director, Mr. Grau, justly observes in his prospectus of the coming season, that

"Madame Ristori inaugurated a new epoch in the history of the American stage, having given other eminent artists the opportunity and advantage to adopt a repertoire never performed in this country, while by carefully watching and studying the school of Madame Ristori, they have been guided towards the highest achievements in their art. In this second season, doubtless, further scope and opportunities will be given to aid in establishing the era of high dramatic art created by the Italian tragedienne."

Madame Ristori's brief season in New York will commence on Wednesday, September the 18th. Her repertoire will consist mainly of dramas new to this country, but she will repeat some of those grand successes of her first engagement—"Elizabeth," "Mary Stuart," "Medea," &c. The new pieces will be "Myrrha," "Jean d'Arc," "Norma," and lastly, "Marie Antoinette," which will prove, we think, the crowning histrionic glory of her life.

This piece has recently been written expressly for Ristori, by Signor Giacometti, with the distinct understanding that it should be first produced in America—a compliment paid by this distinguished Italian to our taste and culture, as flattering from him as it is complimentary to us. At the same time it must be remembered that no nation has offered such unaffected, and such substantial proofs of admiration of the genius of Ristori, as America has spontaneously offered.

We believe that "Marie Antoinette" will be the crowning glory of Ristori's career for the reason that it is the study of her maturity in art; that in the great characters she has hitherto sustained, she has touched the height and the depth of human passions and emotions as therein depicted, but in "Marie Antoinette" she will grasp a new class of associations and startling incidents, and encounter a complication of human sorrows and agonies, sustained by a patient

courage, a meek devotion, a womanly sympathy, a mother's love, a wife's sacrifices, a heroism of which only woman is capable, in the face of a frantic people's hatred, with death grinning from the ghastly guillotine.

Such a character is worthy of the grandest of Ristori's genius. Ristori is not likely to treat it lightly. She has made every character a study; she has gauged their superficial and their metaphysical idiosyncracies, and we may expect that she will grasp, with the vivifying soul of genius, the whole character of one who lived and loved, and suffered and died, within the memory of some now living, of whom tradition does not speak in veiled and doubtful terms, but facts abundant, familiar and authentic.

If Ristori had but one rôle, and that rôle "Marie Antoinette," and if the Poet has done justice to the subject, while admitting that Art is superior to lucre, as we cannot be Madame Ristori, we should not object to be Mr. Grau.

Mr. Grau has caused great alterations to be made in the Theatre Francaise, improvements which will greatly add to the comfort of the audience. In the production of the pieces no expense has been spared to render their mounting every way worthy of the occasion. The costumes, scenery, and general appointments will be new and magnificent, and strictly in accordance with the period in which the drama is laid.

We expect the coming season will be one of signal triumph. Already the ticket offices are thronged with eager applicants for seats and tickets, and the excitement to see her increases every day.

## THE OPENING OF THE SEASON— FIRST CONCERT AT IRVING HALL.

The musical season of 1867 and '68 was inaugurated on Wednesday evening last, by Mr. L. F. Harrison, at his beautiful concert room, Irving Hall. The evening was cool and fair, and consequently a large audience was in attendance, crowding the room even to the doors. The company was elegant, and yet decidedly enthusiastic.

Out of respect to the first concert of the season, we quote the programme:—

### PART I.

1. Grand Duo (by request), Donizetti—Signor Ferranti and Signor Fortuna.
2. Grand Galop for Piano, Mills—Miss Marie Gilbert.
3. Romanza—"Ah, quello," from "Maria Padilla," Donizetti—Signor Fortuna.
4. Grand Fantasia for Harp—"La Traviata," Rocco—Signor L. Rocco—his first appearance in America.
5. Aria—"Si tu savias," Balfe—Madame Parepa-Rosa.
6. Fantasia for Violin—"Sur l'Hymne National Russe," Artot—Mr. Carl Rosa.
7. Cavatina—"Don Magnifico," Rossini—Signor Ferranti.

## PART II.

1. Grand Fantasia for Piano—"Lucia de Lammermoor," Lizst—Miss Marie Gilbert.

2. Cavatina—"Cruda funesta," from "Lucia," Donizetti—Signor Fortuna.

3. "Moto perpetuo," Paganini—Mr. Carl Rosa.

4. Ballad—"I've been Roaming," Horn—Madame Parepa-Rosa.

5. "The Fisherman," Mattei—Written expressly for Signor Ferranti.

6. "La Danse des Fees," "Morceau Characteristique," Alvars—Signor L. Rocco.

7. Duo—"Elisir d'Amore," Donizetti—Madame Parepa-Rosa and Signor Ferranti.

Signor Fattori and Mr. G. W. Colby, Conductors.

This is quite a brilliant array of names, but judged by the star of the evening, Parepa, all others sink into twinklers of very remote magnitude. The fact is that Parepa-Rosa is peerless. Notwithstanding that we have been accustomed to hear her constantly for two years, and notwithstanding the old proverb, "familiarity, &c., &c.," we listen to her at the opening of the third year, and have to yield to the same fascination that she exerted on her first appearance. Her lovely voice is as pure and as rich as ever, and from her modelled throat, it pours forth in clear, unbroken volume, and with the same delicious ease, which is not the least part of the singular fascination she exerts. It is hard to imagine a more perfect voice in its quality, than Parepa-Rosa's. Through all its extensive range, its quality is perfectly equal; it has no flaw; no weak spot, and its production is so thoroughly artistic that each note is emitted easily, purely, perfectly rounded, and, with scarcely an exception, perfectly intoned. She is mistress of all the grace and finesse of her Art, and her *floriture* is unimpeachable in its brilliant articulation. Such is Parepa-Rosa, and certainly here, she is without a peer.

She sang her Italian Aria with all the smooth fluency necessary, but such things are very cold in a concert room. In her duo with Ferranti, from "Elisir d'Amore," an amusing and telling point was made by a prolonged and clear true shake by the lady, which Ferranti attempted to imitate but failed in the breath. It was well managed, it tickled the audience, and drew forth a tremendous encore.

Madame Parepa-Rosa next sang C. E. Horn's beautiful Cavatina, "I've been roaming"—that is, she sang some parts of it and transposed and altered others, so that the composer would hardly have recognized his own work. This is neither fair nor necessary, and is moreover a liberty which artists should not take with composers. Her pronunciation of the English is generally faultless, but we object in this Cavatina to her pronunciation of the word "dew" as "doo." Still she vocalized it delightfully, and the vociferous applause brought her out, when

she courtesied and retired, but was compelled to reappear, and sang "The Irish girl's letter" with such distinct enunciation and such simple, earnest grace, that another determined encore was the result. Parepa bowed and retired, but that would not do, so she acceded to the importunate and very unreasonable demand, and sang again. This time it was "The Nightingale's trill," and she never sang it more exquisitely. No voice from any throat ever warbled with more ease, more melody, or more gushing impulse. In it her perfect control over her voice was specially evidenced in the steady sustained notes, the instantaneous passing from forte to pianissimo, and the truth and certainty of her piano attack of the high notes. Her singing of this song roused the enthusiasm of the audience to the highest pitch; again was she recalled, and some even tried to force a repetition.

No singer could desire a greater ovation than this, and we say it without hesitation, that no singer ever more thoroughly deserved it.

Miss Gilbert has not improved since we last heard her. Her deficiency in strength and flexibility was painfully evident in Liszt's "Lucia di Lammermoor," which is a piece beyond her power to execute in public. A less ambitious selection would have placed her in a better light before the public, and would have proved more successful. Miss Gilbert has qualities which, with patience and practice, can be developed into excellences; but she has commenced a public career too soon.

Signor Ferranti sings with great dash and humor, and is a settled public favorite. Signor Fortuna has a smooth, pleasant voice, but his selections are ineffective, and his manner of singing them does not give them any more color.

Carl Rosa's best performance was the "Moto perpetuo" of Paganini. This he played with excellent articulation and fluency. Its effect, however, was somewhat marred by a momentary lapse of memory; but he recovered himself promptly, and concluded it without embarrassment.

Signor Rocco is not a good harpist. He has much execution, but is very lax in his harmonies, and it would be difficult to decide upon his style. Some allowance, however, must be made for a first appearance, and for the fact that he could not get his harp to stand steady;—it would slip, so that he necessarily lost some control of the instrument. We hope to have a better account to give of him on a future occasion.

COLOGNE.—The Prussian Military Band, under the direction of Herr Wieprecht, gave a concert on the 2d ult. They will play, also, in Coblenz, Elberfeld, and Ems.

## ITALIAN OPERA.—ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

Our readers should bear in mind that Mr. Max Maretzek will inaugurate his Fall Season of 1867, on Monday, the 23d instant. In our recent notice of the Prospectus of this establishment, we were in error in stating that there would be two seasons of twenty nights, one before and the other after Christmas. The full season will consist of forty nights, divided into two subscription seasons of twenty nights each. We learn that there are flattering prospects of a brilliant subscription, and that the programme for 1867 has given the utmost satisfaction, both as to the engagements and to the repertoire.

The programme of the opening week will be announced in our next.

## FRENCH OPERA COMIQUE.

Mr. H. L. Bateman, the impressario of the French Opera Comique, has issued his preliminary announcement, in which he states that he will inaugurate his operatic season at the Theatre Francais, on Tuesday, September the 24th, when the celebrated Mdle. Lucile Tostee will make her appearance in the character of La Grande Duchesse de Geroldstein, in the brilliant opera of that name, by Offenbach, which is now being performed at many of the European theatres with extraordinary success. This opera is full of light, sparkling melodies, is charmingly instrumented, and its plot is replete with incidents of the most exciting and humorous character.

We shall speak more of Mr. Bateman's enterprise in our next.

## TERRACE GARDEN CONCERTS.

Theodore Thomas still waves his baton at Terrace Garden, and delights his visitors with *recherche* and enjoyable programmes. Nearly ninety concerts have now been given, and the variety of music produced, shows the almost unlimited resources of Mr. Thomas's repertoire. We understand that the Garden will be kept open until the end of the present month, so that we have still two weeks of these pleasant concerts before us.

To-morrow evening the fourteenth Sunday evening concert will take place.

## AN APOLOGY.

Our Contributors "Paletta" and "Shugge," having been decoyed by the glorious autumn weather, have failed to enrich our columns this week. We look for their return next week, when they will duly present themselves to our readers.

PESTH.—Mdle. Geistingner received 6,500 florins for a star-engagement of twenty nights at the Stadttheater.